Registered—No. M. 1175.

343

The Mysore Gazette.

Vol. 63.] PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY. [No. 40.

BANGALORE, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1928.

PART I.

IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT ORDERS.

CHIEF SECRETARIAT.

Passes orders on the Report of the Committee appointed to examine the question of the revision of the Famine Code.

READ—

Government Order No. R. 3769-79—R. M. 36-26-1, dated the 4th January 1927 appointing a Committee of the following members to go into the question of the revision of the Mysore Famine Code:—

The Revenue Commissioner, Chairman.
The Chief Engineer.
Mr. K. Matthan, Inspector General of Education.
„ M. Zahiruddin Mecci, Director of Industries and Commerce.
„ S. Hiriyannaiya, Inspector-General of Police.
„ K. V. Anantaraman, Deputy Commissioner, Tumkur District.
„ C. B. Gopala Rao, President, District Board, Kolar.
„ M. Venkatesa Iyengar, Under Secretary to Government (Secretary to the Committee).

2. Government Order No. R. 5158-9—R. M. 36-26-4, dated the 19th February 1927, appointing Mr. Syed Taj Peeran, Deputy Commissioner, Kolar, District as a Member of the Committee in place of Mr. M. Zahiruddin Mecci, deceased.

3. Government Order appointing Mr. N. S. Subba Rao, Director of Public Instruction, as a Member of the Committee in place of Mr. K. Matthan absent on deputation in England.

4. Letter No. C. 2442—26-27, dated the 14th October 1927, from the Revenue Commissioner and Chairman of the above Committee forwarding the report of the Committee.

(Printed as annexure).

ORDER No. R. 2758-826—R. M. 2-27-4, DATED 25TH SEPTEMBER 1928.

The Mysore Famine Code was revised in the year 1909. Since then distress due to insufficient rainfall has occurred at various periods in several parts of the State. In the adoption of relief measures on such occasions, the policy laid down in the Code has had to be deviated from, as it was found inconvenient in certain respects, and the instructions contained in it had to be modified in the course of the operations. The chief points of difference between the policy contemplated in the Code and that actually adopted, especially during the period, 1923-24 to 1925-26, were the following:—

(1) The absence of test works,

(2) The provision of employment as far as possible near the homes of the labourers.

(3) The provision of liberal takavi advances to agriculturists and artisans at the very outset in order to prevent unemployment,

(4) The administration of gratuitous relief to the deserving poor as soon as it was found that such relief was quite necessary to prevent emaciation, and

(5) Payment of wages on a scale sufficient to provide for two dependants also.

2. To facilitate the course of operations it was considered necessary to revise the Famine Code, and to issue suitable additional instructions so as to clearly indicate the policy to be pursued; and a Committee was appointed in the Government Order read above to go into this question. They were authorised to co-opt when necessary, the Director of Agriculture, the Chief Conservator of Forests and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to attend meetings at which subjects relating to their Departments might come up for discussion, and also to examine, if necessary, some Amildars, officers of the Public Works Department, and non-officials who took part in relief operations.

3. After a careful consideration of the existing provisions of the Famine Code and the changes proposed to be introduced therein, the Committee observe that no wholesale revision of the Code is called for, as it is intended to deal with actual famine affecting very large tracts of country and continuing for such a length of time that intervention by Government will be necessary. The aim of relief operations in the State has been to deal with distress in the earliest stages and prevent it from becoming acute and developing into famine. Having this policy in view, the Committee consider it sufficient if a chapter is added as Chapter II (A) to the present Code showing the action to be taken in the pre-test period. Government accept this recommendation of the Committee. As however the proposed new chapter is an amplification of clauses (j) to (n) of Section 35 of the Code, these clauses may be omitted from that section, and embodied in the new chapter to avoid repetition.

4. Section 37 (A) now proposed is approved subject to the following remarks:—

(1) As the amendments are intended to meet the preventive stage of famine conditions, the preamble will be modified as follows:—

When owing to deficiency or failure of rainfall, apprehensions of distress arise in any locality, the Deputy Commissioner should take all necessary steps to prevent the conditions deepening into distress.

(2) After the words "Amrut Mahal Kavals" in 37 (1), the words "where possible" shall be added.

(3) In regard to wages referred to in Section 37 (6) Government observe that there should be some relation between the rate of wages, the price of ragi prevailing in the market, and the task-work. To carry out this principle, the normal Public Works rates have to be suitably raised and each man given a wage sufficient to meet his needs and that of one or two dependants who cannot work. Large families of small children and old people unable to work should be given relief separately, especially in view of the fact that there will be no organised relief at this stage for dependants.

'(4) In regard to task-work, the Deputy Commissioner has power under Section 122 to vary the same on relief works. The Committee suggest that the Deputy Commissioner may, in proposing such variations, consult with advantage public opinion, especially as represented by local bodies. Agreeing with this, Government direct that the following addition be made under Section 37 A (6).

"When the price of ragi rises above the normal rate, wages should be given to labourers sufficient to provide for the subsistence of themselves and two dependants each, in order to prevent starvation. The task-work on large works and the daily wages on small works are to be adjusted according to the prevailing rates of food grains in the locality, the Deputy Commissioner being the authority for deciding the rates. He will also keep in touch with public opinion in regard to the varying of task-work.'"

5. As the other recommendations made in Sections 37 (B), 37 (C), 37 (D) and 38 are in accordance with the policy adopted for relief measures during the last few years, they are approved.

6. In regard to the suggestions of the Committee on the changes to be made in the later chapters of the Code, Government are pleased to issue the following orders:—

(1) Under Section 75 of the Code, the Deputy Commissioner is required to make recommendations to the Commissioner, in regard to the areas where relief works have to be undertaken, and the order in which they should be taken up, in consultation with the Executive Engineer and non-official public opinion. Government have

already indicated in their Order No. R. 6811-21—R. M. 45-26-10, dated the 22nd April 1927, the order in which works are to be taken up. Government accept the suggestion of the Committee that the Deputy Commissioner should keep in touch with non-official opinion in the taking up of works in the programme. The following sentence shall be added under Section 75:—"As to the areas in which works should be started and the order in which works on the programme should be undertaken, the Deputy Commissioner shall keep in touch with non-official opinion, especially that of local bodies. The works may preferably be taken up in the following order:—

(i) Tank maintenance works.
(ii) Feeder channels to restored tanks.
(iii) Tank restoration works.
(iv) Road works, and
(v) Village Improvement works.

(2) The Committee propose that clause (*b*) of Section 39 may be so amended that the task work may be somewhat above the ordinary task in the case of all test works whether village works or otherwise. Government consider the existing provision to be sufficient to satisfy the principle that the conditions of labour on test works must be "hard but not repellent".

(3) Under Section 84 of the Code, children over 14 years only are treated as working children and those below are paid as dependants. Government do not consider it desirable to reduce the age limit for workers and direct that the present rule may remain unchanged.

(4) Section 93 provides for rest to the mothers in cases of child birth on relief works after the birth and payment of Re. 1 for comforts. This section is proposed to be amended so as to give 10 days rest to the mother in expectation of confinement in addition to payment of Rs. 2 instead of Re. 1. This proposal is approved.

(5) Under Section 189 of the Famine Code, members of Local Boards, etc., are considered eligible to visit poor houses and to enter remarks in the book kept for the purpose with regard to the control and management of such institutions. The Committee's recommendation that the visitors of poor houses may also be allowed to see relief works and kitchens is accepted.

7. The Committee have made some general suggestions in regard to relief measures.

(*a*) It has been laid down above, that the Tank Maintenance works should be given preference in areas where distress on account of drought is apprehended. Under the Tank Maintenance Rules the raiyats have to pay a contribution equal to one year's assessment on the lands under the atchkat for doing the earth work. The Committee recommend that the Deputy Commissioner may be given the discretion to waive such contributions due from the raiyats whenever this is considered necessary. This policy was adopted during the distress in the years 1923-24 to 1925-26 and was successful. This is therefore approved.

(*b*) In regard to the Committee's proposal that some arrangement should be made to see that the raiyats in alienated villages get the concession of a suspension or remission of assessment sanctioned by Government for unalienated villages, Government have already passed orders in the matter in their Order No R. 28-48—L. R, 482-17-42, dated the 2nd July 1925. Government have no objection, however, to remit a proportionate portion of the jodi payable to them in cases where the Inamdars produce proof of their having granted a remission of assessment to their tenants.

(*c*) The Committee have also suggested that Jodidars may be given loans for works specially intended to provide labour to the people in the alienated villages. The grant of a subsidy from State Funds to persons who own large estates and who want to undertake such works is contemplated in Section 28 (c) of the Famine Code and this provision may be applied to Jodidars.

(*d*) The recommendation of the Committee to give tools free to the members of depressed classes from the District Reserve is approved. Care should be taken to get them back soon after the works are closed.

8. The Committee observe that the Famine relief programme is not prepared with sufficient care and attention, with the result that when distress occurs, the officers who have to deal with the situation find the programme not sufficiently helpful. The necessity and importance of preparing the programme according to the principles laid down in the Code has already been pointed out in the Government Order dated the

22nd April 1927. Government however desire once again to emphasize the need for strictly adhering to these instructions so that the operations may be carried out pomptly and smoothly.

9. There are however some more points which the Committee have not considered but on which clear instructions for the guidance of the local officers are necessary so that measures for the relief of distress may be adopted and put into execution promptly.

(1) There is at present no form prescribed for the weekly or fortnightly reports due from Amildars and Sub-Division Officers during the distress period. As it is necessary to know in detail the seasonal and other conditions in these areas so as to enable the officers to gauge accurately the extent of distress, Government direct that the forms of reports referred to in Appendix A to this order be adopted in future.

(2) The experience of the distress in 1923-24 has shown that it will generally take some time for relief works to be started even according to programme. It is quite essential that some village works such as sinking of wells in tank beds, removal of silt in ponds and grant of gratuitous relief to needy persons should be attended to promptly in order to infuse confidence into the people. Government therefore direct that the Amildars of Taluks where distress prevails be given during such seasons an imprest of Rs. 250 each to enable them to carry out such works.

(3) Wherever necessary, local men should be encouraged to take up contracts of relief works by the grant of suitable advances so that wages may be paid either daily or twice a week to the coolies.

(4) The Amildars of affected Taluks should release as many village servants, Toties and Talaries, as possible, so that they may earn their wages at public and village works; and they should generally be given the light work of supervision and paid wages therefor. In the case of those who are actually employed on Government work during the time, the Amildars should bring such persons who are poor on the gratuitous relief list and relief should be given to them out of the imprest placed at their disposal.

(5) Whenever distress prevails, arrangements may be made to give loans to Shikmidars also on adequate security being furnished.

(6) In the case of Taluks where harvests have failed entirely or have yielded only a two anna crop owing to scarcity of rains, etc. seed grains may, as far as possible be supplied free from the Agricultural Department to the poor raiyats.

(7) Growth of Bili Jola which is a quick growing crop producing both grain for men and fodder for cattle may be encouraged during seasons of distress by permitting cultivation thereof in dry tank beds and under wells and tanks with a small quantity of water.

(8) Arrangements should be made for medical relief by deputing Sub-Assistant Surgeons for examining the condition of people in the affected villages and on works.

(9) It has been the policy of Government in recent years to remit half wet and garden assessment on lands situated in areas subject to drought. In Section 35 (*n*), of the Code, only the word "suspension" is used. Government direct that the words "or remission" be added after the word "suspension" wherever the latter occurs.

10. Government desire to convey their thanks to the members of the Committee for the comprehensive report they have submitted. Their recommendations, as well as the instructions now issued, are based, for the most part, on the experience of measures for the relief of distress adopted in 1923-24 under the guidance of the then Revenue Commissioner (now *Rajasabhabhushana*) Mr. K. Chandy. These instructions should be embodied in the Hand Book on Famine Relief Administration, so as to serve as a guide to officers who may have to deal with similar situations.

N. MADHAVA RAO,
Chief Secretary to Government.